



# Code Connection

“Partnering with our Community to build and maintain a safer San Antonio”

## Message from our Assistant Director

It is important that a city like San Antonio has building-related, fire and property maintenance codes that are current and up to date to nationally accepted and accredited standards. In order to ensure this, we review all 10 codes on a three-year cycle that coincides with the release of new codes by the International Code Council (ICC).

Over the past year, this review was done in collaboration with a committee that included representatives from neighborhoods, businesses, design professional organizations and current members of City boards and commissions. The 2015 San Antonio Property Maintenance Code, (SAPMC) along with the 2015 versions of the ICC building-related and fire codes, was approved by Council on Jan. 29 and will become effective May 1, 2015.

Garage sales are fairly common throughout the year but now that spring is around the corner, we begin to see quite a few more. It's that reason we thought including an article on this topic was timely. In the past, many neighborhoods and residents voiced concerns about yard sales. We have heard you and have made some changes to the way in which our code enforcement officers address them. If you are planning one, make sure you get a permit. They're required to help protect neighborhoods from the permanent encroachment of commercial uses. Another requirement is that you can't have more

than 2 signs displayed on the premises (not anywhere else) to advertise your garage sale and they must be a specific size. Having said this, due to several comments we have received throughout the community related to the limitation on garage sale signs, we are right now researching the feasibility of modifying the signage requirements to allow for more and in additional locations. I am interested in getting some feedback from you and your neighbors on this, so please send us an email with your comments.

If you have any compliance issues, there are a few ways you can let us know:

- Call 311
- Download the free “311” app onto your smart phone
- Visit our website, click on “Online Code Enforcement Request” icon on right
- Please continue to send your comments, ideas and suggestions to us at: [CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov](mailto:CodeConnection@sanantonio.gov)

Best Regards,

*Mike*



Michael Shannon, PE, CBO  
Assistant Director-Field Services  
Code Enforcement & Building  
Inspections

### Contact Us

Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Center  
1901 S. Alamo  
San Antonio, Texas 78204

Hours: Monday – Friday  
7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

*To report Code Compliance issues call 311 or download City's "311" Phone App.*

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## 2015 City Codes Effective May 1 — David Simpson

In the early 1900's the United States system of building regulations was based on three different regional building code models, each created by its own regional code group. For decades regional code development met many of the local regulatory needs of jurisdictions, but it was soon clear that the country needed a single reference of national model building codes. In 1994, the regions decided to coordinate their efforts and create the International Code Council (ICC) to develop codes that would not have regional constraints and would be consistent with industry and safety standards. Since then, the building-related, fire and property maintenance codes that apply to the construction, alteration, enlargement, replacement, use and occupancy of every building or structure are updated by the ICC and National Fire Protection Association every three years.

In an effort to stay current with the latest building and safety standards for the City of San Antonio, the Development Services Department (DSD) adopted a three-year code update process to stay aligned with building and safety industries.

Through the recent I-code adoption process, a committee was established to review and propose updates to the current San Antonio Property Maintenance Code (SAPMC). The 2015 SAPMC Code Review Committee consisted of representative from neighborhoods, businesses and property owners. It also had members of the City's Building Standards Board (BSB), the Neighborhood Code Enforcement Task Force, San Antonio Board of Realtors, San Antonio Apartment Association, and San Antonio Building Owners and Managers Association.

After the committee reviewed the City's 2011 SAPMC and proposed specific amendments, DSD presented the proposed updates to the BSB in December 2014. The Board recommended approval and on February 10, 2015, they were

adopted by City Council. Major updates include:

- Increase the "no-notice" provisions for repeat violations within 2 years, rather than 1 year, to obtain quicker compliance.
- Buildings constructed without required permits are deemed unlawful structures.
- Clarifies that retaining walls are required to be maintained in a safe condition.
- Strengthens fence requirements to ensure missing wooden slats are replaced for typical fences.
- For residential properties abutting alleys, address identification on the rear of the property will be required beginning 2016.
- Adds language to use nationally recognized standards and federal, state and local laws to help with determining overcrowding limits in bedrooms.
- Excludes natural or man-made "rough" areas as part of golf courses in current operation from the "high weeds" violation.



The SAPMC is enforced primarily through the BSB and Administrative Hearing Officer (AHO), making the violations administrative offenses. This makes the process more transparent, quicker to set before an enforcement body and removes the burden of a criminal conviction. It is important to note that the City can still file a criminal case.

The 2015 SAPMC is largely based on the 2015 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) with local amendments. It will become effective May 1, 2015.

**David Simpson** is the Code Enforcement Supervisor for the City's North Field Unit. He has accumulated over 20 years experience in the building and safety industry and has worked for the City since 2003.

## What You Need to Know About Yard Sales — Jenny Ramirez

If you are planning to have a garage sale in San Antonio, you must have a permit. You are allowed to have one yard sale per quarter for a total of four per year. *TIP:* Your fourth permit can be obtained free if you present your prior yard sale permit receipts at the “One Stop” (1901 S. Alamo).

Requiring permits for garage sales is a way to protect residential areas from being utilized for commercial uses. They also help to keep the aesthetic qualities of neighborhoods, and ensure the orderly operation of these sales within residential areas.

You can get a permit through a variety of ways:

- Online at [www.sanantonio.gov/ces](http://www.sanantonio.gov/ces)
- By visiting us at the Cliff Morton Development & Business Services Center (“One-Stop”), 1901 S Alamo
- At participating HEB stores

They run about \$16.00, depending on where it’s

purchased, and are good for 2 consecutive days as indicated on the approved permit. The hours of operation are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

How about signs to advertise your yard sale? City code (Sec. 16-293) outlines the size, location and quantity. They cannot be larger than four square feet in area and shouldn’t be posted on telephone poles, light standards, street signs or the City’s right-of-way. You can have *only* two signs in the lawn of the property where the sale will take place and they must be removed by the last day of the permitted sale.

In case there is bad weather, the garage sale may be rescheduled and a new permit will be issued on a one time basis. The request must be made within one week from the initial permit date of issuance and in person at 1901 S. Alamo.

**Jenny Ramirez** is the Code Enforcement Supervisor assigned to the Neighborhood Enhancement Team. She has been with the City for 17 years.

“Garage sale signs placed anywhere else than your yard are considered *Bandit Signs.*”

## Performance Measures — January/February 2015

We want you to know what we are doing! Our main goals are to be more proactive and to gain quicker compliance. These performance measures track our level and effectiveness of our service for Tier I and II issues. *Tier I* includes key health and safety issues, such as high weeds, trash, unsecure structures, visual obstructions. *Tier II* encompasses building maintenance and zoning.

	JAN.	FEB.	TOTAL	FY 2015 TO DATE (FY=Oct. 2014 to Sept. 2015)
Inspections initiated by Code Officers (Proactive)	4,218	4,691	8,909	20,881
Inspections initiated through complaints/calls (Reactive)	727	1,121	1,848	4,089
Pro-activity Rate (Goal of 50%)	85%	81%	83%	83%
Response Time—Tier I (Goal of 2 business days)	1.9	1.1	1.6	1.6
Response Time—Tier II (Goal of 6 business days)	1.8	1.2	1.5	1.7
Compliance Rate (Goal of 90%)	92%	96%	94%	94%
Graffiti locations abated	1,839	1,897	3,736	8,617
Square footage of Graffiti Abated (Goal of 3.6 million)	194,460	261,373	455,833	1,383,956

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### Did You Know...

If you want to sell food items at your yard sale, you must obtain a permit from the City's Metropolitan Health District (Unified Development Code, Sec. 16-307).

[sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes.asp](http://sanantonio.gov/dsd/codes.asp)

For all of San Antonio's Codes, go to: [www.municode.com/library/TX/San\\_Antonio](http://www.municode.com/library/TX/San_Antonio)

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### What You're Saying

"I called 311 asking to speak to the Code Officer in the Southwest sector and was referred to Officer Edward Montano. I spoke to the Officer and within 5 minutes of the call, he came to my residence and I was able to demonstrate that my vehicle was, in fact, operable. The case was closed out and I was very satisfied with the high level of customer service Officer Montano provided to me." - Resident

"Thank you very much. We really appreciate your timely response. We have been trying to improve our building over the last 10 years, and have been at that location since 1976. We appreciate all you have done to help us continue to try and improve the neighborhood." - Small Business Owner

"I want to complement the Code Enforcement Officers that work in District 1 and 5. They are doing a great job. Keep up the good work!" - Resident

"On Wednesday afternoon I used the city's 311 app to report graffiti on a fence in our neighborhood. Early Thursday morning in freezing weather, Anthony from the Graffiti team was out there painting the fence. Thank you for your prompt response!" - Resident

### Top 5 Violations — January/February 2015

VIOLATIONS RESOLVED	TOTAL
Property Maintenance	3,896
Graffiti	3,736
Bandit Signs	3,551
Alley Inspections	1,256
Junk Vehicles	999

### Before and After



A home previously identified as a dangerous structure on the Westside is repaired to meet city code.

### Graffiti Corner

**Community Volunteers Needed!** Whether you want to pick up a paint brush, a phone or log-on to your computer, you can wipeout graffiti in one stroke! A **free**, 1.5 hour volunteer workshop will be held at 110 Callaghan Road (City facility), your choice of date:

- Thursday, Mar. 19 at 1:00 p.m.
- Thursday, Apr. 9 at 10:00 a.m.
- Saturday, Apr. 18 at 9:00 a.m.

A few of the topics to be covered include:

- The "3 E's" of Graffiti
- Who's responsibility is it? Can I get free paint and supplies?
- There's an app for that!



If you want to attend, contact Lisa McKenzie at [Lisa.McKenzie@sanantonio.gov](mailto:Lisa.McKenzie@sanantonio.gov) or call (210) 207-5430.

